

XV.—*Notes on the Ornithology of the Gambia.*

By PERCY RENDALL, M.D., F.Z.S.

DURING a residence of twenty-one months I obtained specimens of the birds enumerated in the following list, within an eight-mile radius of Bathurst, on the Gambia. The town is situated on the island of St. Mary—a narrow tongue-shaped delta, which lies parallel to, and is bounded on the north by, the river, and on the south by tidal mangrove-swamps. It is about five miles long, but in no place is it more than one mile in breadth. A shell-road, which crosses numerous mangrove-swamps and creeks, connects it with the mainland of British Combo. The river Gambia, opposite Bathurst, is two miles across, though much broader both above and below the town. The district on the north bank of the mainland is locally known as Barra.

The birds were for the most part migrants, and were more plentiful during the rainy season, which lasts from June to October.

Mimosa trees, scattered palms (both cocoanut and cabbage varieties), dense and thorny undergrowth, with numberless grasses and creepers in the wet season, formed the main cover or “bush.”

For the nomenclature and classification of my collection I am exclusively indebted to Canon Tristram. Most of these birds are in his cabinet; and it was due in great part to his suggestions and encouragement that I persevered, notwithstanding the many drawbacks incident to the pursuit of ornithology in West Africa.

TURDUS PELIOS.

One only obtained.

CRATEROPUS PLATYCERCUS.

This species is a very close sitter. It builds a slight strong cup-shaped nest of small thorny mimosa-twigs, about ten feet above the ground, and lays three eggs, which are similar to those of our Starling, though not quite so pale, and somewhat smaller.

SAXICOLA GENANTHE.

One on 2nd October and the second on 2nd November, 1889, both males.

PRATINCOLA RUBETRA.

A male and a female on 20th and 23rd December, 1889.

PENTHOLÆA ALBIFRONS.

One only; it was shot at Barcote, on the very outskirts of British Combo.

RUTICILLA PHÆNICURUS.

One pair, near Bathurst, 6th December, 1889.

SYLVIA HORTENSIS.

Two, on the island, on 9th September, 1889.

ACROCEPHALUS STREPERUS.

One female, shot at Barra, was the only one that I saw; it was on 29th November, 1889.

CISTICOLA CINERASCENS.

This little bird has a habit of skulking about in the coarse grass of damp ground; it builds a small fragile nest in the centre of a tuft of grass. It is not uncommon.

CISTICOLA CURSITANS.

A single specimen.

SYLVIELLA MICRURA.

The short tail and jerky action of this little bird reminded me not a little of our Common Wren.

PARUS LEUCOPTERUS.

When this bird flies, the contrast of black and white is very striking.

MOTACILLA ALBA.

During the autumn months there were a few pairs generally on the island.

MOTACILLA FLAVA.

Common all through the winter season.

MOTACILLA CAMPESTRIS.

Occasional birds noticed.

MOTACILLA MELANOPE.

A rare visitant to the Gambia.

PYCNONOTUS ASHANTEUS.

Not a day passed without my both seeing and hearing this bird. He is a songster of very tolerable power; his call-note has gained him the sobriquet of the "Fifty-three" bird. It is difficult to ignore him, as from dawn to sunset he is always reminding you of that particular number! He is almost as bold and mischievous as a London Sparrow. Though so common, his nest is extremely hard to find. One had strips of Morse-telegraph paper woven into its structure; its usual materials are the pendent rootlets of the *Ficus*, among which is placed its slight cup-shaped abode. It lays from three to five eggs, varying in the same clutch from reddish to chocolate blotches on a white ground-colour.

CRINIGER BARBATUS.

Not common.

ORIOLOUS AURATUS.

Common on the mainland all the year round; occasional stragglers seen on the island.

MELÆNORNIS EDOLIOIDES.

LANIUS AURICULATUS.

LANIUS RUTILANS.

Two shot at Barra, 20th December, 1889.

NILAUS AFER.

The only one seen.

CORVINELLA CORVINA.

Two were shot at Barra.

TELEPHONUS SENEGALUS.

This species is the commonest Shrike seen on the Gambia. It is a powerful songster, though it can seldom be seen whilst singing, as it resorts to the thickest coverts. Its song, which though short is very tuneful, is uttered in the air like that of the Tree-Pipit.

LANIARIUS SULPHUREOPECTUS.

Only one obtained.

LANIUS BARBARUS.

Not common.

DRYOSCOPUS GAMBENSIS.

One shot on 9th October, 1889.

PRIONOPS PLUMATUS.

Two at Barra, 22nd December, 1889.

BUCHANGA MUSICA.

One in British Combo.

MUSCICAPA ATRICAPILLA.

A female, at Bathurst, 20th September, 1889.

PLATYSTEIRA CYANEA.

When I first saw and obtained this bird at Barcote, in Combo, its vocal powers astonished me. Its song consists of from six to eight clear flute-like notes, in perfect sequence and in a descending scale. Not until I had watched the bird for some minutes in breathless attention could I persuade myself that this perfect whistle could proceed from the small bird which was feeding, like a Blue Tit, in the tree above my head.

TCHITREA RUFIVENTRIS.

HIRUNDO RUSTICA.

One in the autumn of 1888.

HIRUNDO LUCIDA.

Common and fearless of man; its low sweet song is sustained for a minute or more, and bears a resemblance to that of a Canary, but is always subdued in tone. It builds a cup-shaped nest of mud, lined with fine grass and feathers, and lays from three to five eggs.

HIRUNDO SENEGALENSIS.

Obtained only in Combo.

HIRUNDO FILIFERA.

Scarce ; one nest with three eggs on 7th November, 1889.
Nest exactly like the one above described.

NECTARINIA PULCHELLA.

Common in the gardens. One nest, with two eggs, which were like Black-headed Buntings' in miniature, was in a lime-tree.

NECTARINIA PLATURA.

Seen only in British Combo.

CINNYRIS SENEGALENSIS.

Scarcely a flowering shrub in my garden yielded any flowers the corollas of which had not been pierced by individuals of this species or of

CINNYRIS CUPREUS.

ZOSTEROPS SENEGALENSIS.

Rare.

PYRGITA DENTATA.

PASSER GULARIS.

Very uncommon.

PASSER SWAINSONI.

Some of these I kept alive for several months. They are very hardy, active, and wild.

CRITHAGRA CHRYSOPYGA.

The natives keep many of these little Siskin-like birds in cages, and speak of them as "Canaries." Their song is monotonous and short. I have had some caged for a considerable period, together with examples of

CRITHAGRA LEUCOPYGA.

TEXTOR ALBIROSTRIS.

HYPHANTORNIS BRACHYPTERA.

HYPHANTORNIS CUCULLATA.

Common. It builds in large colonies on the lower leaves

of the cocoanut-palm, &c. I have seen as many as twenty nests on a single leaf.

HYPHANTORNIS MELANOCEPHALA.

This bird, which more frequently is to be seen than any other member of this family, prefers the lower branches of the mimosa, common in the marshy ground between the mangrove-swamps; and though it also builds in colonies, I have seldom seen more than two nests on a single tree; they were usually about six or seven feet above the ground-level. Their eggs, which present every variation in colour between olive-green and russet-brown, are seldom in clutches of more than two, though once or twice I have taken three from a nest.

HYPHANTORNIS LUTEOLA.

Rare on the Gambia.

HYPHANTORNIS PERSONATA.

QUELEA ÆTHIOPICA.

Lives well in confinement. I kept several of them from time to time in a large flight-cage.

PYROMELÆNA FLAMMICEPS.

PYROMELÆNA AFRA.

PYROMELÆNA FRANCISCANA.

Builds a woven-grass nest and lays two or three eggs, of a deeper blue than those of our Hedge-Sparrow. The nest has the hole in the side, and is built in a tall weed of the pea family, almost invariably. The males lose their red feathers so gradually that all stages intermediate with the females are to be seen in August.

VIDUA PRINCIPALIS.

Notwithstanding the length of the tail-covert feathers, I successfully kept these birds caged for some time. I noticed that the males, after some time, moulted their black feathers so as to appear like the females.

VIDUA PARADISEA.

COLIOSTRUTHUS MACRURUS.

Uncommon.

AMADINA FASCIATA.

This little "Cut-throat" I found had a pretty unassuming little song, if kept in a separate cage.

LAGONOSTICTA SENEGALA.

ESTRElda CERULESCENS.

Have had many of these in captivity.

ESTRElda CINEREA.

ESTRElda SENEGALA.

Common; specially noted in flocks.

ESTRElda MARIPOSA.

I took one nest of this bird in long grass; the nest was a slight structure, and contained seven white eggs.

SPERMESTES CUCULLATUS.

A nest of this bird I took on 21st April, 1889; it contained four eggs of a pure white colour.

MUNIA TOPELA.

A pendent nest, with three white eggs of this species, was taken from a small tree, 8 feet from the ground; the opening was in the side.

MUNIA CANTANS.

Only two obtained.

HYPOCHERA CHALYBEATA.

A couple on 13th September, 1889.

GALERIDA CRISTATA.

A single specimen shot.

LAMPROTORNIS AENEa.

One on 30th September, 1889.

LAMPROCOLIUS AURATA.

The native hunters shoot and skin these birds in large numbers, and sell them to the French firms trading on the

Gambia, who, as I learnt, supply the Parisian hat manufacturers.

LAMPROCOLIUS CHLOROPTERUS.

On 11th January, 1890, at Barra.

LAMPROCOLIUS CHALCURUS.

LAMPROCOLIUS SPLENDIDUS.

Rare.

NOTAUGES CHRYSOGASTER.

BUPHAGA AFRICANA.

Common and noisy, but difficult to shoot, as they will not leave the backs of the cattle. Besides the parasites thereon, they seem also very partial to the lachrymal secretions of these animals.

CORVUS SCAPULATUS.

One pair only bred in a large cotton-tree in the Government House grounds. All others I noticed on the mainland were very shy, though this Crow is fairly common and widely distributed.

CRYPTORHINA AFRA.

Abundant. Follows the cattle.

CYPSELUS AFFINIS.

Very common; its nest, which is of a dry glutinous character, is mingled with grass rubbish picked up whilst on the wing and placed under every verandah and roof, suitable or unsuitable, in the colony. The nests, which often have an opening at each end and no lining material, seldom contain more than a single egg. This bird is unable to rise from the ground.

CYPSELUS PARVUS.

Of this bird I have never seen more than two at one time. It is scarce, and flies with incredible rapidity at a considerable altitude.

CAPRIMULGUS POLIOCEPHALUS.

Frequently seen at dusk in clearings. Like other Goat-

suckers, it has a habit of squatting on the road, from which it does not get up until one's horse has got within a few yards of it, and then only to re-settle on the road further ahead.

SCOTORNIS LONGICAUDA.

Less frequent.

MACRODIPTERYX LONGIPENNIS.

This remarkable bird I only know of certainly from Combo. The Goatsuckers that I shot on the delta all belonged to the two preceding species, though I often shot them hoping I should find the two long feathers of *Macrodipteryx*. It was so dark when they appeared that it was quite impossible to discriminate accurately before firing.

DENDROPICUS PUNCTATUS.

Found where there were suitable trees.

MESOPICUS GOERTAN.

Occasionally seen.

IRRISOR SENEGALENSIS.

On the mainland at Barra.

IRRISOR ERYTHORHYNCHUS.

UPUPA EPOPS.

Solitary specimens were at times noticed.

MEROPS PERSICUS.

These birds were often seen above the mangrove-swamps at high water, hawking for insects in graceful circles, and settling occasionally on the higher bushes.

MEROPS PUSILLUS.

CORACIAS ABYSSINICA.

Only two obtained.

CORACIAS PILOSA.

CORACIAS GARRULA.

The favourite food of this bird appears to be lizards, and

I have oftentimes watched it dash down from the topmost branches of a tree upon one that had rashly ventured into the open.

CORACIAS CYANOASTER.

CORACIAS NÆVIA.

EURYSTOMUS AFER.

One shot on 12th July, 1889.

CERYLE RUDIS.

Common on all sides of the island, and hovering, preparatory to a dash into the water; it is always a conspicuous feature on the banks of the Gambia.

HALCYON SENEGALENSIS.

HALCYON SEMICÆRULEA.

HALCYON CHELICUTI.

CORYTHORNIS CYANOSTIGMA.

The main food of this beautiful little bird was, apparently, large dragon-flies.

TOCCUS NASUTUS.

The appearance of this bird in considerable numbers seemed always to herald the wet season, and it was locally known as the "Rain-bird" in West Africa. Its loud, discordant, and monotonous cry is supposed to be a sure indication of rain.

CORYTHAIX BUFFONI.

CORYTHAIX PURPUREUS.

MUSOPHAGA VIOLACEA.

Of a pair shot near Barra, one of them yielded, on dissection, a pure white egg, which is now in my collection.

SCHIZORHIS AFRICANA.

On the mainland in Combo.

CUCULUS CLAMOSUS.

One on 6th September, 1889.

CHALCITES SMARAGDINEUS.

The most beautiful bird I saw on the West Coast; its skins, I regret to say, find a ready sale on the Gambia, owing to the hateful traffic created by the French plumassiers.

*CHRYSOCOCYX CUPREUS.**COCCYSTES GLANDARIUS.*

One on 21st December, 1889.

*COCCYSTES CAFER.**CENTROPUS SENEGALENSIS.*

This bird, which the natives call the Doodoo or "Snake-bird," is very common. Its cry, which is five or six times repeated in a descending scale, whilst it bows like a Hoopoe, has gained it the first name. Whether it feeds on snakes I know not; lizards, however, I can answer for.

POGONORHYNCHUS DUBIUS.

This quaint-looking bird I saw on the mainland on several occasions.

POGONORHYNCHUS VIEILLOTI.

One specimen shot near Bathurst.

*BARBATULA CHRYSOCOMA.**PŒOCEPHALUS SENEGALUS.*

On the mainland this bird is not unfrequently met with in flocks.

PALÆORNIS DOCILIS.

This bird is constantly kept in captivity by the negroes, and certainly deserves its specific name, but I never knew one that could imitate human vocal sounds or even whistle a tune.

SCOPS LEUCOTIS.

This bird I secured alive, and reluctantly converted into a skin, as my black boy refused either to feed it or to live with it, saying, "Hah, massa, da debil bird, I fear him too much, he go witch me for sure!" He did make strange noises at night I must admit.

Another great sorrow was the death of a tiny *Scops*, which, after two days' captivity, was appropriated by a felonious cat: a few feathers only were left behind, so its name will always be unknown to me.

STRIX FLAMMEA.

Only two noticed.

CIRCUS MACRURUS.

CIRCUS PALLIDUS.

HALIAËTUS ALBICILLA.

Single specimens frequently seen.

ASTUR SPHENURUS.

One of these birds dashed into the open window of one of the houses, with a specimen of *Cypselus affinis* in each claw. We caught him, and as he refused to relax his hold upon his victims, he was subjected to the influence of chloroform. The two Swifts were then liberated and he was put outside; he shortly afterwards flew away, sadder, doubtless, and wiser for the strange experience.

MELIERAX POLYZONUS.

ASTURINULA MONOGRAMMICA.

TINNUNCULUS ALAUDARIUS.

One shot 15th January, 1889.

MILVUS ICTINUS.

MILVUS MIGRANS.

GYPOHIERAX ANGOLENSIS.

PHALACROCORAX AFRICANUS.

I have seen the eggs and young of this Cormorant brought down the river by the natives; adults were sometimes observed on the mangrove swamps surrounding the Island of St. Mary.

PLOTUS LEVAILLANTI.

One shot whilst fishing in a swamp.

ARDEA GULARIS.

Common. Seen in company of cattle.

BUTORIDES ATRICAPILLUS.

Very abundant. Its nest is composed of thorny twigs, on which slight platform it deposits usually three eggs. This species builds in colonies, and I have often counted five or six nests in a single mimosa tree.

SCOPUS UMBRETTA.

Common in suitable situations.

LEPTOPTILUS CRUMENIFERUS.

A pair of this Stork which I brought from Bathurst in 1890 are still in excellent health in the Zoological Society's Gardens. On the Gambia the natives often protect these birds, as they prove useful as scavengers, and they build in and around their villages. A tame one in Bathurst was an adept at rat-catching in the merchant's yard where he was confined.

PLECTROPTERUS GAMBENSIS.

DENDROCYGNA VIDUATA.

Shot some little distance up the river.

TRERON CALVA.

This bird was as valuable in West Africa as the Quail was formerly in the wilderness. During the rainy season there seems to be a constant flow of migrants from the S.W. Incredible numbers are shot, and every negro who has a gun lies in wait for them from sunrise to sunset. They are easy of approach and fall readily when hit. Personally I can vouch for their excellence on the table.

TURTUR AURITUS.

Not at all uncommon.

TURTUR SEMITORQUATUS.

Some of these Doves follow the same line of flight towards the N.E. as the *Treron calva*, but as a rule fly higher, and require much straighter shooting to bring them down.

CHALCOPELIA AFRA.

Common at all times.

CEA CAPENSIS.

A pair of these birds I gave to Mr. Meade Waldo when I left the Gambia in March, 1890; he found that they bore captivity well in Tenerife.

PTEROCLES TRICINCTUS.

Only on the mainland; they are found in wooded spots invariably, never in the open.

FRANCOLINUS BICALCARATUS.

I got one clutch of eggs of this bird. It frequents sparsely wooded and partially cultivated portions of the mainland. I never flushed it in the open "ground-nut" fields. A pair that I gave to Mr. Meade Waldo lived for months in his aviary. These birds are excellent eating.

*PTILOPACHYS VENTRALIS.**PELIPERDIX LATHAMI.*

Rare.

COTURNIX COMMUNIS.

Common in February and March on the mainland at Barra.

NUMIDA RENDALLI.

Although I both heard and saw this Guinea-fowl, during an expedition I made to Barcote in Foreign Combo, it was so wary, and the bush so thick, that I was unable to obtain a specimen. Friends of mine shot it frequently on the upper river; but, not being ornithologists, they plucked and did not skin their specimens.

FULICA ATRA.

Uncommon.

PARRA AFRICANA.

Seen only in Combo, on some fresh water.

EUPODOTIS MELANOGASTER.

For sportsmen on the Gambia this is the great prize. It

frequents the open ground-nut fields, near Barra especially ; it never runs, but rises like a Pheasant. It is most delicate eating.

SQUATAROLA HELVETICA.

A male shot on 26th October, 1889.

ÆGIALITIS CURONICA.

A female on 7th April, 1889.

HOPLOPTERUS SPINOSUS.

Common about the cultivated patches of ground on the mainland. Wary and hard to approach.

CHETTUSIA SENEGALLA.

Occasionally met with.

STREPSILAS INTERPRES.

Two shot, 22nd November, 1889.

HIMANTOPUS CANDIDUS.

A few were seen in company with other Waders following the ebbing tide on the river-banks.

TRINGA SUBARQUATA.

I shot three out of an immense flock feeding in a mangrove swamp at low water, 22nd October, 1889.

CALIDRIS ARENARIA.

Two obtained on 6th October, 1889.

TRINGOIDES HYPOLEUCUS.

This bird is found on every swamp.

TOTANUS CALIDRIS.

One only on 17th September, 1889.

TOTANUS GLAREOLA.

One on 2nd November, 1889.

TOTANUS CANESCENS.

A single specimen on 27th September, 1889.

NUMENIUS PHÆOPUS.

Common, but very wary and hard to shoot. It was to be seen on every mangrove swamp. Excellent eating.

LARUS PHŒOCEPHALUS.

Specimens are always to be seen.

LARUS RIDIBUNDUS.

STERNA CASPIA.

Common all the year round.

HYDROCHELIDON NIGRA.

STRUTHIO CAMELUS.

A fine Ostrich lived in Bathurst for years, and I often saw it, but at last it grew sufficiently troublesome to be shipped off to the Jardin d'Acclimation at Marseilles. It was brought when young from the upper river by native traders.

XVI.—*A List of Birds collected in Corea.*

By C. W. CAMPBELL, of H.B.M. Consular Service.

(Plate V.)

I. *Introductory Remarks.*

THE collection which forms the subject of this paper was made in 1888 and 1889 during my residence at Söul, the capital of Corea, and at Chemulpo, the western Treaty Port.

That the list of my collection does not contain a greater number of species is simply due to the fact that I could not induce the native hunters to assist me, although I frequently offered what appeared to me very tempting rewards for specimens. I had therefore to rely solely on my own efforts in leisure time. With the exception of, perhaps, half a dozen, all the specimens were shot by myself. The majority come from the neighbourhood of the two places where I lived—Söul and Chemulpo. During an extended journey which I made in the autumn of 1889 to the northern frontier of Corea, I noticed several species of which I have no examples, especially in the forests bordering the Yalu River, but the hurried nature of my progress through that region prevented any serious attempt at collecting.